**The Pennsylvania Core Standards**

Pennsylvania has been part of the national movement to adopt common standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. In the past, standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level varied among states. This can be difficult for students moving from one state to another. Common standards allow for nationwide collaboration among educators on best teaching practices and professional development.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted Common Core Standards in July 2010. Since that time, a group of Pennsylvania educators created the PA Core Standards. These new standards mirror the content and rigor of Common Core, but reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards. These standards were to be implemented state-wide starting with the 2013-2014 school year, and the Fleetwood Area School District is embracing this transition. The Common Core standards set high expectations for all students. They are rigorous and internationally benchmarked, research- and evidence-based, aligned with college and career expectations, and they build on the foundation laid by individual states. The aim of this state-led initiative is to develop standards that ensure all students are held to consistent expectations that will prepare them for college and career. Please note that while the standards identify what students should know and be able to do, they DO NOT dictate HOW teachers are to achieve these outcomes. Curricular decisions are still made by local school districts.

A copy of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Mathematics can be found at this address:

<http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/PACCSS%20Mathematics%20PreK%20HS%20January%202013.pdf>

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| **At all levels, the PA Core Mathematics Standards encompass:** |
| **1) FOCUS**  As the transition is made to the PA Core Standards, rather than racing to “cover” many topics each year, there will be  **a deep focus on the major topics in each grade level**. This deep **FOCUS** is intended to provide strong mathematical foundations for student learning to build on from year to year. In each focus area students should achieve:   * **solid conceptual understanding.** (Students need to understand the WHY and not just the HOW.) * **a high degree of procedural skill and fluency.** (Students are expected to know their math facts--quickly!) * **the ability to apply the math they know to solve problems** inside and outside the math classroom. |
| **2)** **COHERENCE**  Think across grades: The Standards are designed around **coherent progressions from grade to grade**. Students must be proficient in the skills at each grade level to be prepared for the mathematical concepts of the next grade level. |
| **3)** **RIGOR**  Math is more than a set of skills to be memorized, forgotten and relearned each year. Each school year will begin with  the expectation that students are competent in the skills from the previous year, so that learning can continue to progress. Students will do more problem-solving and communicating mathematically.  **Equal intensity/emphasis** is to be expected in each:     * **conceptual understanding** including **written explanations** of mathematical understandings * **procedural skill** and **fluency** * **application** **of skills** in **problem-solving** situations |
| In addition to the content to be learned, EVERY grade level will address habits of mind required to reach mathematical proficiency. These are referred to as the ***Standards for Mathematical Practice*** and will be emphasized at every grade level.   1. **Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.** 2. **Reason abstractly and quantitatively.** 3. **Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.** 4. **Model with mathematics.** 5. **Use appropriate tools strategically.** 6. **Attend to precision.** 7. **Look for and make use of structure.** 8. **Look for and make sense of regularity in repeated reasoning.** |

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| **As we transition to PA Core Standards . . .** | | |
| **What’s Shifting?** | **What to Look for in the Backpack?** | **How Can Parents Help?** |
| Your child will **work more deeply in fewer topics**, which should lead to better conceptual understanding. Less is more! | Look for assignments to require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer. Just the answer is not always enough. | Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts. |
| Your child will **keep building on learning year after year**, starting with a strong foundation from the previous school year. | Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. Building on that, they will then focus on Algebra. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn. | Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward. |
| Your child will **spend time practicing and memorizing math facts**.  Additionally, your child will spend time **practicing lots of problems** in focus areas to build skill fluency. | Your child might have assignments that focus on memorizing and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems. Assignments that practice focus area skills are also to be expected. | Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Encourage practice in small time increments on a regular basis. Provide time for your child to work on math skill fluency at home. |
| Your child will **understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding**. | Your child may have assignments that ask for written explanations of their math work. Students may be asked to prove their conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts. | Ask your child to explain his/her work to you. Notice whether your child REALLY knows why the answer is what it is. |
| Your child will be asked to **use math in real-world situations**. Your child needs to know which math to use for each situation. | Look for math assignments that are based on experiences that can be expected to take place in the real world. | Ask your child to “do the math” that pops up in daily life. |